



Figure P-1, Planning Sectors

TOWN SECTORS OVERVIEW

The Town of Blacksburg is divided into nine sectors including the area immediately adjacent to the town's boundaries in Montgomery County. The sector chapters originated in the 1996 Comprehensive Plan as the land use portion of the plan. They have been expanded to include major issues of concern, including land use, as expressed by Town citizens and representatives. Sector boundaries have been modified to encompass each of the 24 neighborhood planning areas.

PUBLIC INPUT

The *Unique Characteristics*, *Critical Issues*, and *Neighborhoods* sections of each sector chapter reflect the direct public input received from residents within each sector. These views were gathered from various neighborhood and comprehensive plan meetings, surveys, and e-mails. The primary purpose of these sections is to characterize the sector and its neighborhoods according to how the citizens of that sector view current conditions. Every effort has been made to accurately and fairly reflect the major issues. While the community cannot enhance its quality of life if the most critical issues are watered down or ignored, neither can it progress in a divisive atmosphere. These sections take a hard look at the critical issues within the community in a spirit of open communication, honesty, and cooperation. The *Vision* and subsequent *Special Considerations* and *Changes from Existing Land Use Map* sections are also derived from public input and the characteristics and issues of each sector.

DEFINITIONS OF LAND USE CATEGORIES

Public/Private Park Land:

Dedicated open space or recreational space, whether owned publicly or privately. This category includes dedicated open space easements.

Agricultural/Vacant:

Land in agricultural use or parcels with no structural development nor any designated open space use, such as a park or golf course.

Very Low Density Residential:

Small clusters of residential up to a net density of one dwelling unit per acre, with some low intensity agricultural uses.

Low Density Residential:

Up to four dwelling units per acre.

Transitional Residential:

Up to and including ten dwelling units per acre; or up to 20 bedrooms per acre, whichever is less.

Mixed Use:

Business/professional offices, institutional, studios, gallery/museum, crafts, specialty shops, bed & breakfast, clusters of transitional residential housing.

High Density Residential:

More than ten dwelling units per acre; or more than 20 bedrooms per acre.

Civic:

Schools, places of worship, government offices or use, clubs and other institutional uses. This category includes Greek social/fraternal organizations.

University:

Academic buildings, residence halls, administrative offices, appurtenant uses (e.g., dining halls, bookstores, etc.) and parking lots to support those activities.

Professional Office:

Offices where professional services are being provided, but retail sales or manufacturing do not take place. Examples include realtors, architects, engineers, physicians, or lawyers.

Commercial:

Retail sales establishments, restaurants, hotels/motels, service stations.

Research/Light Industrial:

Research and development, assembly, packaging, processing, or manufacturing which does not emit smoke, noise, soot, dirt, vibration, odor etc.

Industrial:

Medium and heavy manufacturing which may produce moderate to significant external effects. Uses include raw materials processing, assembly lines, and other large-scale operations.

TOWNWIDE LAND USE POLICIES

Overall Land Use

- ❑ Manage growth. Managed growth means guiding growth in relation to community goals. Managed growth means decisions will be made in concert with the land's natural carrying capacity, the community's ability to financially support development through the provision of infrastructure and related community services and facilities, the community's desire and need for additional growth and development, and related provisions contained in the comprehensive plan.
- ❑ New infrastructure and new public services will be planned in direct relationship to the managed growth policy above. Any new infrastructure and/or new public services deemed necessary during this plan's projected time frame will be analyzed, studied and considered for the town's Capital Improvements Program.
- ❑ Preserve significant open space to buffer development and to preserve the area's view shed.
- ❑ Encourage land use patterns that promote energy conservation by seeking a balance between in-fill development and the reduction of congestion.
- ❑ Encourage in-fill development in established areas that is compatible with existing and/or planned land use, that is at a compatible scale with the surrounding area, and that can be supported by adequate public facilities and transportation systems.
- ❑ Achieve compatible transitions between adjoining land uses through the control of height and the use of appropriate buffering and screening.
- ❑ Stabilize residential neighborhoods adjacent to commercial areas through the establishment of transitional land uses, vegetated buffers and/or architectural screens, and the control of vehicular access.
- ❑ Utilize landscaping and open space along rights-of-way to minimize the impacts of incompatible land uses separated by roadways.
- ❑ Use cluster development as one means to enhance environmental preservation when the smaller lot sizes permitted would allow more sensitive development of local topography with less land disturbance, or would enable continuity of greenways.
- ❑ Encourage planned developments. Increased density or intensity of development may be justified based on site design considerations.

- ❑ Encourage the underground placement of all existing wired facilities.
- ❑ Places of worship are shown on the future land use map in their 2001 locations, because they are important anchors in a neighborhood and should be retained. They are an appropriate use in most neighborhoods when developed at a scale consistent with the surrounding community, as allowed by special use permit. The town does not wish to limit future locations of places of worship to the indicated map areas.

Community Design

- ❑ Encourage cluster development and preservation of open space.
- ❑ Encourage neo-traditional type development.
- ❑ Protect the integrity and quality of forested areas as buffers, habitat, and pollutant removal systems, and ensure the retention of existing high-quality trees and woodlands and the planting of new trees during land development.
- ❑ Protect scenic views, rural community atmosphere, and landscape character.

Natural Environment and Open Space

- ❑ Protect the region's scenic views, rural-community atmosphere, and natural character by preserving large areas of open space throughout Town.
- ❑ Conserve and protect networks and corridors of natural vegetation, forest cover, wildlife habitat, and undeveloped steep slopes.
- ❑ Promote innovative land use management and building techniques in the region to enhance and preserve the natural environment and utilize energy efficiently, while also accommodating for future development. Techniques may include infill and cluster developments, enhanced use of bikeways and sidewalks, environmentally friendly lighting, and public transportation.
- ❑ Encourage both private and public efforts to preserve agricultural and open lands through land trusts, open space easements, and fee simple acquisition.
- ❑ Utilize Planned Residential and Rural Residential zoning as an open space preservation technique, and continue to educate the public on the benefits.

Parks and Recreation

- ❑ Utilize Capital Improvement Program (CIP) land banking funds to purchase land for local parks and partner with Montgomery County for the acquisition and development of land for regional and district parks.

Greenways

- ❑ Coordinate the greenway system with area stormwater management.
- ❑ Preserve and reclaim natural floodplains to enhance water quality; protect wildlife habitats and open space; and provide recreational, educational, and alternative transportation opportunities.
- ❑ Develop an attractive, cost-effective, and convenient greenway system that connects public and private open spaces throughout Blacksburg such as the Virginia Tech campus and the Hoge land trust.
- ❑ Encourage private support and development of greenways that use planned and existing utility easements, road acquisition and construction, etc. to minimize public costs of greenway development.
- ❑ Develop a greenway system that protects the biological diversity of plant and animal species, maintains the connections between natural communities, provides wildlife corridors, includes the area's natural and cultural diversity, and preserves linear stretches of open space.

Historic Preservation

- ❑ Pursue the creation of additional historic overlay districts where there is a concentration of historic structures and good community support

Economic Development

- ❑ Implement parking solutions that address the need for expanded, convenient, and attractively designed parking.
- ❑ Create a unique attraction(s) in the downtown that will create an exciting sense of place, change local perceptions, and attract families, students, visitors, and shoppers. Host community festivals and downtown events to attract consumers to the downtown area.
- ❑ Create opportunities for new retail space in downtown.
- ❑ Increase the town's capacity to support new commercial development.
- ❑ Improve the utilization of prime retail space in Blacksburg for retail uses.
- ❑ Work in partnership with Virginia Tech and the development community to meet the projected demand for multi-family housing.
- ❑ Work with the county to control residential growth at Blacksburg's borders.

- ❑ Expand industrial development opportunities at Blacksburg Industrial Park.
- ❑ Protect established single-family neighborhoods from the encroachment of rental and commercial conversions.

Information Technology

- ❑ Continue to be proactive in the design and siting of wireless telecommunication facilities.

Utility Services

- ❑ Participate with local governments in regional infrastructure planning and to better coordinate extensions across town boundaries.
- ❑ Provide public wastewater service to all areas within the town: to the Tom's Creek area and the 1998 boundary adjusted area utilizing the Capital Improvement Program; to already developed areas of Town on a cost share basis; and to new development areas at the developer's expense.
- ❑ Require new, unsewered developments to provide a wastewater collection system on-site to enable connection to a public wastewater system once it becomes available.
- ❑ Support alternate methods to land filling solid waste to help conserve natural resources and help extend the life of the landfill in an environmentally responsible manner.
- ❑ Encourage the use of ditch sharing between utility companies to avoid separate parallel ditches.
- ❑ Support the development and expansion of natural gas service that is reliable and cost effective.

Transportation

- ❑ Minimize the impact of interstate construction on the character and scenic nature of the town.
- ❑ Support the improvement of key highway corridors in the Roanoke and New River Valleys with particular sensitivity to safety, quality of life, and natural beauty.
- ❑ Encourage development of an intermodal hub (air, highway, and rail) and distribution terminal in the New River/ Roanoke valley region.

- ❑ Develop the arterial and collector street system in accordance with the Street Classification map.
- ❑ Provide for the interconnection of neighborhoods and parcels with local streets and with collector or arterial streets where planned or dictated by traffic volumes.
- ❑ Plan for new roads in the central portion of Town, which are consistent with the historical grid network and complete the street grid system.
- ❑ Support the retention and utilization of existing alleys.
- ❑ Encourage the provision of new alleys into development projects.
- ❑ Coordinate land use decisions with existing and planned public transportation services.
- ❑ Create a network of sidewalks that serves the entire community and provides for safe pedestrian access to all potential destinations in Town including public schools, downtown, Virginia Tech, community facilities, major shopping areas, and residential areas. Allow a variety of sidewalk sizes and materials as appropriate to setting and use.
- ❑ Improve the supply of public and private parking facilities in Town, and ensure that these facilities are visually pleasing and consistent with the character of the town by being unobtrusive, extensively landscaped, and appropriately lighted.
- ❑ Prevent incompatible land uses from encroaching on the airport and its safety zones in order to avoid future hazards or nuisances to aircraft and the town's citizens.

Public Safety

- ❑ Maintain public safety facilities to meet community needs.

Government Relations

- ❑ Encourage proactive, well planned initiatives that keep the region ahead of the latest development issues.
- ❑ Communicate with local businesses and related interests to foster an atmosphere of support and to encourage sustainable economic development throughout the region.

Community Facilities and Human Services

- ❑ Retain civic activity centers downtown, such as the Farmers Market, the Lyric Theatre, and the municipal complex.
- ❑ Provide facilities to meet existing and anticipated community needs (e.g., recreational, day care, educational, etc.).
- ❑ Develop the downtown central common for assembly, public recreation, and festival uses.
- ❑ Provide multiple downtown gathering spaces for all walks of life.
- ❑ Provide public facilities that serve as examples of the desired development quality in Town.

Neighborhood Planning

- ❑ Provide an appropriate mix of housing styles and choices, allowing for different types of housing from neighborhood to neighborhood.
- ❑ Reduce the suburbanization of ridgelines.